Method for fast reconstruction of content information

The present invention relates to a method for the fast
reconstruction of content information of a recording medium,
5   and to an apparatus for reading from and/or writing to
recording media using such method.

Nowadays multi-format players for optical disks support optical
disks with multimedia data content. Supported data file types
10   range from MP3 audio files via JPEG photos to MPEG4 video
clips. The files are usually stored in a file system on the
optical disk in a format designed for optical data retrieval.
Each time an optical disk is inserted in the player, the device
initially reconstructs content information, e.g. the file
15   system, and possibly establishes a database before being able
to access the multimedia files. Such a reconstruction of the
content information and/or an establishment of a database is
also needed in other circumstances, e.g. in a disk changer in
which one of a plurality of disks is selected and transferred
20   into a playback position, or when a portable player wakes up
from a power down mode.

The time it takes to reconstruct the content information
depends, to a large extent, on the number of files on the
25   recording medium, i.e. in the file system. The larger the
number of files, the longer it takes to reconstruct the content
information. Reducing this time duration is very convenient for
a user.

30   US 6,034,925 discloses a method for identifying the content of
a recording medium, whereby a characteristic profile of the
medium is determined and compared with a plurality of profiles
stored in a local or a remote database. In the database a
content index comprising title and artist information is stored
35   together with the corresponding profile. This content index is
used when the profile of the specific medium is found in the

database. The title and artist information is then displayed
during playback of the content.

It is an object of the invention to provide a method for the
5   fast reconstruction of content information of a recording
medium.

According to a first aspect of the invention this object is
achieved by a method for reconstructing content information of
10 a recording medium comprising the steps of:
- determining a signature of the recording medium, the
signature comprising a plurality of elements;
- comparing the signature with a plurality of signatures stored
in a content database; and
15 - retrieving associated content information from the content
database if the signature matches a signature stored in the
content database.
Preferably the content information is a file system, which
contains the position of the content on the recording medium.
20 The method checks whether the specific recording medium has
been encountered recently in a playback device. For this
purpose a signature of the recording medium is determined,
which is a feature vector defined in such a way that it
provides a robust unique identifier for the recording medium.
25 The signature is able to discriminate between recording media
having only minor differences in data content. The signature is
compared with signatures in a database. Only if the same
physical recording medium with the same content (file-system)
is present, a match is found. In the prior art, in contrast,
30 different physical recording media with the same content do all
result in the same match. If a match is found a file system
associated with the stored signature is retrieved from the
database and used for the current recording medium. This
increases the start-up speed dramatically when a recording
35 medium is inserted into a playback or recording device,

provided that the recording medium has recently been inserted
into the device.

Favourably, the step of comparing the signature with a
5 plurality of signatures stored in a content database comprises
evaluating the mathematical or logical distances between the
determined signature and the signatures stored in the content
database. If a distance with a value of zero is encountered,
this is considered as a match. If, on the other hand, no
10 distance with a value of zero is encountered, the system
considers that no match exists in the files system database.

According to another aspect of the invention a method for
reconstructing content information of a recording medium
15 comprises the steps of:
- determining a first part of a signature of the recording
medium, the signature comprising a plurality of elements;
- comparing the first part of the signature with a
corresponding part of a plurality of signatures stored in a
20 content database;
- determining a further part of the signature of the recording
medium if the first part of the signature matches at least one
signature stored in the content database;
- comparing the further part of the signature with a
25 corresponding part of the plurality of signatures stored in the
content database; and
- retrieving an associated file system from the content
database if the signature matches a signature stored in the
content database.
30 In this approach a hierarchical structure is employed. The
order of the elements of the signature is arranged in such way
that the first m elements are evaluated quickly, while the
further elements may take a longer time to determine. This
allows a very fast determination whether a recording medium has
35 not yet been stored in the content database. Only if the first
m elements do not allow to exclude that a recording medium has

previously been encountered, the further elements are considered.

Advantageously, in the comparing steps a negative progressive search approach is employed, in which the elements of the determined signature are compared with the corresponding elements of the signatures stored in the content database one at a time, wherein of every element of the signature may yield a negative search result.
The elements of the signature are defined such that if a "No Match" between an element in the signature and the same element of all the signatures in the signature list is encountered, then a "No Match" is concluded categorically. This speeds up the process as the further elements do no longer need to be considered.

Favourably, the method further comprises the steps of:
- reconstructing the content information from the recording medium if the determined signature does not match a signature stored in the content database; and
- storing the reconstructed content information and the determined signature in the content database.
The solution described above with reference to the prior art requires a manual intervention by a user to add artist and title information to a database. Under the same situation, the method according to the invention generates the file system automatically and adds it to the database together with the associated signature.

Advantageously, an apparatus for reading from and/or writing to recording media uses a method according to the invention for reconstructing content information of the recording medium. Such an apparatus is very convenient for a user since the start-up procedure needs less time if the recording medium has previously been inserted in the apparatus.

Favourably, the apparatus performs the reconstruction of the content information of the recording medium after insertion of the recording medium, after transferral of the recording medium into a playback position, or after wake up from a power down

5   mode. These are the main situations in which a reconstruction of the content information becomes necessary.

For a better understanding of the invention, an exemplary embodiment is specified in the following description with

10   reference to the figures. It is understood that the invention is not limited to this exemplary embodiment and that specified features can also expediently be combined and/or modified without departing from the scope of the present invention. In the figures:

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Fig. 1   shows a method according to the invention for the fast reconstruction of a file system of a recording medium;

20   Fig. 2   shows a general structure of a file system database;

Fig. 3   schematically shows a first query of the file system database for a matching signature; and

25   Fig. 4   schematically shows a second query of the file system database for a matching signature.

In Fig. 1 a method according to the invention for the fast reconstruction of the content information 11 of a recording

30   medium inserted into an apparatus for reading from and/or writing to recording media is shown. In the following the invention is explained for optical disks. However, the invention is also applicable to other types of recording media. Furthermore, reference is made to a file system as an example

35   for content information.

When in a step 1 a disk is inserted into a loader of an optical
playback and/or recording device, either manually for a single
disk device or through the selection mechanism of a disk
changer, in a step 2 a signature <S> 10 is generated. The
5   signature 10 has the form of a feature vector, so that,

$$<S> = \{s(1), s(2), s(3),...,s(n)\}.$$

Each element in the feature vector $\{s(1), s(2), s(3),...,s(n)\}$
10 is a single measurement of a feature based on the pattern of
the data content on the disk.

The signature 10 is then compared in a step 3 with a signature
list in a file system database of the playback and/or recording
15 device. Each signature in the list is associated to a file
system 11, as shown in Fig. 2. The file system database is
preferably stored in a non-volatile memory.

If in the next step 4 no matching signature 10 is found, the
20 file system 11 of the disk is reconstructed 7 from the data
retrieved from the disk. This new file system 11 and the
associated signature 10 are then added 8 to the file system
database. On the other hand, if in the step 4 a match is found,
the file system 11, which is associated to the matching
25 signature 10, is retrieved from the file system database and
used as the file system 11 of the disk. In both cases the
procedure ends 6 when the complete file system 11 has been
retrieved.

30 Fig. 2 shows the general structure of a file system database.
Each signature 10 in the file system database is associated to
the corresponding file system 11.

The signature feature vector 10 is defined in such a way that
35 it provides a robust unique identifier for a disk. Furthermore,
it should be able to discriminate between disks having only

minor differences in data content. Preferably the signature 10 also handles multi-session disks and uses features, which can be measured accurately and quickly. In order to perform the determination of the signature and the comparison with the file system database within a reasonable time, the length of the feature vector preferably is moderate.

Possible elements for the determining the feature vector comprise:

Disk Status:

- Open/Closed disk
- Number of sessions
- Number of tracks in each session

Timing information:

- Lead-in time of each session
- Lead-out time of each session
- Q-Code information of each data track shown in the table of content
- Total time of each session calculated from the timing information in the table of content

Data integrity:

- Data checksums of specific track

Preferably the data checksum of the last track on the disk is analysed. The data checksum of the specific track is the arithmetic sum of a pre-defined area inside the data track. Depending on the implementation of the method, the pre-defined area is the beginning, the middle or the end of the track. The size of the area is one sector or more. The checksum preferably is 16 bit or 32 bit.

Of course, other features of the recording media can also be used for determining the feature vector.

Different approaches exist for querying if the input signature <S> matches one of the signatures 10 inside the File System Database.

Fig. 3 schematically shows a first approach for querying the file system database for a matching signature. In a step 2 the signature <S> is constructed by evaluating the different feature vector elements. The distances between the signature vector <S> and each of the signatures 10 in the signature list of the file system database are then evaluated 31. If in a step 4 a distance with a value of zero is encountered, this is considered as a match 41. If, on the other hand, no distance with a value of zero is encountered in the step 4, the system considers 42 that no match exists in the files system database.

Another possible approach for querying the file system database for a matching signature is shown in Fig. 4. A hierarchical structure is employed in this approach. The order of the feature vector elements of the signature <S> is arranged so that the first m elements are evaluated quickly, while the elements from $m+1$ to n may take a longer time to determine. All elements are defined such that if there is one "No Match" between an element in the signature <S> and the same element of all the signatures 10 in the signature list, then a "No Match" is concluded categorically 42. Elements 1 to m of <S> are determined first 21, then a query for a match is performed one element at a time 43, 44. On the other hand, for the elements $m+1$ to n, each element is determined separately 22, 23 and queried for a match immediately 45, 46. If a signature 10 is found in the signature list, which is equal to the determined signature in all elements, this signature is considered 41 a match.